



**For Immediate Release**

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**Southern Growth Policies Board Names  
Featherbone Communiversity  
2010 Innovator Award Winner from Georgia**

**RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC** – Southern Growth Policies Board is pleased to announce **Featherbone Communiversity** as the recipient of its *2010 Innovator Award from Georgia*. The Communiversity represents a unique transformation of a manufacturing company into a collaborative, intergenerational learning enterprise, where every citizen in the community is considered a student.

In 2005, when the Warren Featherbone Company in Gainesville, Georgia, sold its infant's apparel business rather than move the business to China, it faced the practical question of what to do with 128,000 square feet of production space and the manufacturing legacy that went with it. Working in partnership with six civic-minded visionaries, the company emerged with a plan for a community learning place. The founding educational partners were Lanier Technical College, INK (Interactive Neighborhood for Kids), and Brenau University.

Core programs at the Communiversity include: a business incubator that is operated by Lanier Technical College in collaboration with the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center and the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute; INK village, which includes masterfully built exhibits of real-world careers that are interactive, kid-sized and replicate the world of work; and Brenau University's programs in nursing, theater and dance, as well as senior adult education programs through Brenau's Life-Long Learning Institute. Collaboration is encouraged between the partners, so Brenau nurses, for example, can train at the Interactive Neighborhood for Kids. In addition to these core programs, numerous public events are held at **Featherbone Communiversity** throughout the year—from Earth Day celebrations to meetings of young leaders—making this truly a community learning center.

Innovator Awards are presented annually to one organization in each of Southern Growth's 13 member states in recognition of initiatives that are improving economic opportunities and quality of life in the region. The *2010 Innovator Awards* were chosen from creative initiatives in the region that aim to help communities recover from the recession. One award winner per week will be announced in Southern Growth's e-newsletter, Southern Compass, leading up to an official recognition of all awardees at [\*\*Southern Growth's Chairman's Conference\*\*](#), June 7-8, 2010 in Lexington, Kentucky. For more information on Southern Growth's Innovator Awards program or Chairman's Conference, contact Ted Abernathy, Executive Director, Southern Growth Policies Board, at (919) 941-5145 or [tabernathy@southern.org](mailto:tabernathy@southern.org).

**About Southern Growth Policies Board**

Southern Growth Policies Board is a regional public policy think tank based in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Formed by the region's governors in 1971,

Southern Growth Policies Board develops and advances visionary economic development policies by providing a forum for collaboration among a diverse cross-section of the region's governors, legislators, business and academic leaders and the economic and community development sectors. Southern Growth provides its members, and the region, with authoritative research, discussion forums and pilot projects in the areas of technology and innovation, globalization, workforce development, community development, civic engagement and leadership. To learn more about Southern Growth Policies Board, visit [www.southern.org](http://www.southern.org).